United Nations S/PV.8211

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8211th meeting

Wednesday, 21 March 2018, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren	(Netherlands)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Miller

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2018/140)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-07885 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2018/140)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Salamé is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Tripoli.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/140, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Salamé and Ambassador Carl Orrenius Skau, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Sweden, on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Recalling the Security Council's latest note 507 on its working methods (S/2017/507), I wish to encourage all participants, both members and non-members of the Council, to deliver their statements in five minutes or less. Note 507 also encourages briefers to be succinct and to focus on key issues. Briefers are further encouraged to limit initial remarks to 15 minutes or less.

I now give the floor to Mr. Salamé.

Mr. Salamé: Let me, at the outset, congratulate the Kingdom of the Netherlands on assuming the presidency of the Security Council.

I am briefing the Council from Tripoli, where I now live, as do an increasing number of my colleagues. For the United Nations to best support Libya, we must be in Libya. I am proud to announce that we have truly returned to the country. But we are here for the whole of Libya, and not for any one region or city. Accordingly, we are now looking to reopen our office in Benghazi. Once conditions permit, we will also seek to reopen in the south. The United Nations has visited cities and towns across the country in which it has not stepped foot for years, and it shall continue to do so. It is essential that we hear from all Libyans and, whenever possible, from where they live.

In early March, I spent three days in Benghazi. I saw a city devastated by three years of conflict. Its downtown is in ruins. Signs of the recent fighting are ubiquitous. I heard strong concerns over the economic and political situation in the country. But, behind the heated speech, there was a widespread willingness to make a fresh start and a sense of optimism. Citizens are mobilizing to rebuild their city. One of many examples is the Benghazi University faculty, who have taken the rebuilding of their university into their own hands. That spirit provides new hope — a hope we must nurture.

Libya was once a country known for its great demographic fluidity. Citizens were willing to speak to one another, traverse the land to meet, marry and trade with one another, or settle in cities far from their place of birth, all the while carrying their personal identity.

Since 2011, this demographic fluidity has been constrained, if not altogether strangled. That has produced more than 300,000 internally displaced persons, who are unable to go back to their homes and often live in miserable conditions. Others have been forced to flee the country altogether. Groups have refused to live with one another. Ideological or identity cleavages have led to widespread ostracism. A discourse of hatred has replaced peaceful interaction. This has been demonstrated most recently by the people of Tawergha, whose return was blocked and many of whom now live in temporary shelters. We have conveyed a plan to expedite the overcoming of this impasse.

More generally, we are committed to reversing mutual exclusion and sterile seclusion. Unless Libyans from all stripes and segments can come together to speak, they will be unable to agree. And unless they agree, the political process cannot progress. Through our own efforts or working with our partners, we have made progress in reversing this situation. We

have reached out to constituencies that had been marginalized, including partisans of the former regime. We have convinced ethnic groups, rival cities and political parties that have not spoken to one another for several years to come together.

My mission is not to slice the cake between competing greeds. First and foremost, it is to bring Libyans together around a common national narrative. That common narrative is crucial. We have seen a range of initiatives — some supported by the United Nations and its partners, many instigated by the Libyans themselves — to rewrite it. Mayors from all across Libya have met together, first in Tunisia and then in Libya, to discuss vital issues of service delivery. They were hosted in the homes of the people of Shahat, in the east, and met again just few days ago in Tripoli, in the west. Popular movements are starting across the country, demanding change and an end to plundering. Members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council have engaged with each other to maintain ties and alleviate divisions. The United Nations has supported local communities in conflict to forge reconciliation agreements. Armed groups that were fighting each other just months ago have accepted to sit around the same table. Facilitating some of these discussions, the United Nations has helped successfully prevent clashes, sometimes at the very last minute. These many activities and efforts are part and parcel of the process of the national conference, which will ultimately gather after the holy month of Ramadan.

Libyans insistently remind us of their wish for a new period of stability and certainty built on accountable and unified institutions. The present institutions are based on shallow legitimacy. They are built on tenuous mandates or are divided into competing bodies. To lead and unify the people and take difficult decisions for their own good, the Government must come from the people. That means that elections must be held.

For the United Nations, working for the conduct of fair, free and credible elections before the end of the year is at the top of our priorities. It is vital that, before elections take place, we are certain that they will be inclusive and their results accepted. It is for that reason I am pleased that voter registration, which ended 10 days ago, was very successful. With 1 million new registrants, 2.5 million Libyans are now eligible to vote. There was strong participation by women and youth in the voter registration update. Such remarkable participation is a clear message to all. The Libyan people want their voices heard though elections.

At the International Women's Day event, I called on women to translate their higher participation as registrants into higher participation as candidates. The United Nations will continue to support the High Commission for National Elections in preparing for elections and will spare no effort in addressing the other preconditions for successful elections. Laws are required for any election to take place, and they must be drafted in a consensual manner. Efforts to adopt a permanent national constitution continue. A draft was approved by the Constitution Drafting Assembly on 29 July 2017. It went through a judicial challenge and, on 14 February 2018, the Supreme Court recognized the validity of the Assembly's vote on the draft. However, hurdles remain to the conduct of a constitutional referendum. The question of referendum legislation remains very controversial, while some factions are clearly not satisfied with the content of the draft Constitution. However, the political process must continue, as the status quo is untenable. I ask the Council to make the message on the unsustainability of the status quo clear to all leaders of the country.

While there is reason for optimism in the political process, there is also cause for concern. A backdrop of continued violence and localized conflicts persists. Extremists, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida, continue to maintain a presence in Libya and recently have carried out attacks. Armed groups, including those formerly integrated into State structures, continue to operate outside of the law, including perpetrating human rights abuses. Bodies bearing signs of torture have turned up in many locations. Libyan men, women and children are increasingly kidnapped for profit, even in the heart of the capital. Citizens are arbitrarily arrested by shadowy security forces. People are held and abused in unofficial, official or quasi-official detention prisons.

In the south, the situation in Sabha is currently of serious concern. There have been a number of fatalities, including civilians. The complex network of local animosities, the ongoing jostling by national political and military players and the growing presence of foreign mercenaries seriously complicate the situation. The conflict risks taking on a transnational dimension that could further destabilize Libya. To prevent further escalation, I have expressed the willingness of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to

mediate should the parties request it. I call on Member States to support Libya's fragile transition by urging their partners there to embrace the political process and not arms. There is space for all in civilian life. It is abundantly clear that no military faction can hope to conquer the country.

The provision of security in Libya should be a matter for national institutions, and not for the numerous armed groups. UNSMIL has embarked on a broad conversation with the leaders of those groups to better understand their perspectives. Too many young men earn a living by carrying weapons. They should instead be reintegrated into civilian life. Before May, we expect to unveil a strategy to do so. However, we must be realistic. In a country awash with arms, disarmament will require time and much stronger national institutions. Furthermore, the arrival of more arms in Libya will only hamper such efforts and damage the political process. Unfortunately, more weapons are indeed being imported. I urge the Council to exert its utmost influence to stop arms from entering Libya.

At the heart of Libya's problems is an economic system of predation that degrades the lives of ordinary Libyans and serves the interests of the powerful. It is the main obstacle to the political process and cements the status quo. I was concerned about it when I first arrived; now I am truly disturbed. That system must be shattered. Resources must flow into building a strong, equitable State for all, and not into the pockets of the few. We have built knowledge and expertise on the matter. I am grateful to the Panel of Experts for their contribution. The United Nations and partner institutions must comprehensively address economic plundering as a key pillar of our engagement.

Human trafficking is but one of the elements of the perverted economy. It is also the most morally reprehensible. Such trade has become the main source of income for some people, leaving them numb to the sight of humans being traded as commodities or of migrants being left to die as they fall off packed pick-up trucks. Libya is a destination, a transit country and a source of migration. Such an important issue, which affects the lives of hundreds of thousands, must be addressed strategically and across borders. I thank our partners in the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States for their excellent cooperation on the issue and on the political process in Libya.

Libya's finances remain precarious. Despite the country now producing well over 1 million barrels of oil a day and generating rosy macroeconomic indicators, it does not enjoy true economic recovery. Instead, Libyan people become poorer every year. Women from the once wealthy Tripoli bourgeoisie confess to putting their teenage children to work. Elders from the east lament that their own internal tribal emergency welfare funds are now depleted. Basic health and education services decay, while frustrated citizens cannot understand why the surge in oil production translates into a further decline in living standards. To address the needs of the most vulnerable and of internally displaced persons, on 25 January we launched a new humanitarian response plan to provide life-saving assistance to almost 1 million people a year. There are signs of a looming monetary and fiscal crisis. Although now high, oil revenues are vulnerable to underinvestment and sabotage. Financial institutions are divided. Government expenditure is bloated and continues to increase, but thus far increased spending has not led to improved services.

Overall, the State's inability to provide services and implement the reforms needed creates a dangerous vicious cycle. It strengthens the self-righteous arguments of others who claim they are stepping in to fill the vacuum left by the absence of the State. In turn, the activities of those individuals and groups undermine the ability of the State itself to fulfil its obligations. For many Libyans that abnormal state of affairs has become the new normal. The vicious cycle must stop.

One aspect of the action plan was the amendment to the Libyan Political Agreement. When I joined the Mission, almost all stakeholders I met requested that the matter be included in the action plan. The appointment of a new executive would have been useful, but only if chosen in an open manner that promoted national unification and strengthened the Government's ability to serve the country for the limited transition. I now believe that they have little chance of being passed. The action plan does not depend on these amendments, and certainly the closer Libya is to elections, the less relevant these amendments become. However, starting tomorrow, I shall commence a new and possibly final attempt to realize these amendments.

In my first briefing from Tripoli, I reported that there was a consistent staccato of bullets overhead. The bullets are still flying. The other day I was told that this was just normal. For the sake of the Libyan people, for

whom we in the United Nations work, we must refuse to accept this normality.

The President: I thank Mr. Salamé for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Orrenius Skau.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): In accordance with paragraph 24(e) of resolution 1970 (2011), of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established by the same resolution. The report covers the period from 18 January to 21 March 2018, during which time the Committee met once in informal consultations and conducted additional work via the written silence procedure.

During the informal consultations held on 9 February, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the interim report of the Panel, prepared in accordance with resolution 2362 (2017), and discussed the recommendations contained therein.

The interim report addressed, inter alia, security-related designation criteria, the implementation of the arms embargo, the unity of State institutions and misappropriation of State funds, the prevention of illicit exports of petroleum, the implementation of the asset freeze and the travel ban. Of the eight recommendations addressed to the Committee, it agreed to take follow-up action on six and took note of one. Two recommendations are addressed to the Council. On 13 February, the Committee issued a press release on the informal consultations.

Also in connection with the Panel's interim report, which is a confidential and unpublished document, the Committee received a letter from the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on 7 March, expressing the Panel's extreme concern regarding media reports citing, often inaccurately and out of context, excerpts from the report, as well as reproducing the content of the entire report. The Committee shares this concern. In a press release issued on 9 March, the Committee stressed the need to ensure the safety of Panel members, in accordance with paragraph 16 of resolution 2362 (2017). The Committee also reiterated its full support and appreciation for the work of the Panel and underlined the importance of that work being carried out in an unhindered manner. Upon the proposal of a Committee member, I intend to call a meeting of the Committee on this matter in the near future.

During the period under review, with respect to the arms embargo, the Committee approved one request for exemption from the arms embargo submitted under paragraph 9(c) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee also received a post-delivery notification from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya for previously exempted items.

Furthermore, on 16 January, the Committee received a letter from Turkey providing certain information concerning the vessel *Andromeda*, which had been seized by Greece. On 29 January, the Committee received an inspection report of the cargo from Greece, in line with paragraph 21 of resolution 2213 (2015). Containers of explosives, detonators and related materiel, as well as empty gas tanks, were found on board this vessel, which was flying the flag of Tanzania. The Committee has notified Libya of the inspection and has written to the relevant States seeking clarifications from them on the matter. Greece subsequently informed the Committee that the Panel of Experts had inspected the seized items.

In connection with the measures imposed on two vessels, the *Nadine* and the *Lynn S*, for illicitly exporting gas oil from Libya, the Committee renewed those measures for a further period of 90 days for each, based on requests received from Libya. The Committee also updated the sanctions list entry details for those vessels based on updates provided by the Panel of Experts. It further wrote a letter to the relevant States on the matter. Recently, the Committee received, through the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), an inspection report from the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen dated 4 January 2018, on the vessel *Lynn S*.

Concerning the travel ban, the Committee approved an extension to the exemption request submitted on behalf of Mr. Sayyid Mohammed Qadhaf Al-Dam, who had been authorized to travel from Libya to Egypt on the grounds of humanitarian need. However, the Committee did not approve a request submitted on behalf of Mrs. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi that she no longer be subject to this measure. Accordingly, she remains subject to both the travel ban and the asset freeze.

The President: I thank Ambassador Orrenius Skau for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members wishing to make statements.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and the briefings we have just heard from Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), and Ambassador Carl Orrenius Skau, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Sweden, on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Peru is closely following the political and security situation in Libya. We are particularly concerned at the ongoing reports of violence in Tripoli and Benghazi and other areas of Libya, as well as the presence of terrorist groups there. We must therefore ensure the promotion of respect for human rights throughout the country, especially as concerns particularly vulnerable groups such as refugees, women and children.

Given this situation, Peru supports the efforts to implement the Libyan Political Agreement and the United Nations action plan. We believe that dialogue and commitment among the various Libyan stakeholders, supported by the mediation efforts of the Special Representative, are the only way to move towards a national transition and achieve sustainable peace. We would therefore highlight the progress made in the talks between the High Council of State and the House of Representatives, as well as the good offices of UNSMIL throughout the process. Good faith and a the spirit of understanding and cooperation must prevail among the parties.

Furthermore, we commend the Libyan people for their enthusiasm with respect to holding elections this year. More than 2 million voters had been registered by the end of January, including more than a million women, as the Special Representative stressed. We also wish to highlight the importance of the town hall meetings, open to all citizens, that have been held with the support of UNSMIL and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

It is our view that these efforts must serve to ensure that citizens are involved in and take ownership of the political process leading to the election of new national authorities, the convening of a national conference and the drafting of a new constitution. We deem important the participation of the entire Libyan political spectrum and civil society, as well as the support of the international community in this. Peru encourages greater participation on the part of women and young people at all levels of this process, and here we wish to commend the inclusion of women in the joint drafting committee and the establishment of a forum to review draft constitutional proposals from a gender perspective.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, our delegation commends the presidency of the Netherlands for placing this important topic on this morning's agenda. Moreover, we thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, for providing the Security Council with an excellent briefing on the situation in Libya and the progress being made in the implementation process of the United Nations action plan for Libya. We wish Mr. Salamé every success in carrying out the functions conferred upon him. We also extend our thanks to Sweden as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, for the important and substantive information provided at this meeting. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his 12 February report (S/2018/140) on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

Equatorial Guinea deeply regrets the current situation that the Libyan people are undergoing. On behalf of Equatorial Guinea, we convey our most sincere support and solidarity for them and our desire to see that country's ordeal come to an end. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea emphatically condemns all armed conflicts and any violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and demands that priority be given to protecting the most vulnerable civilians as well as all personnel providing humanitarian and health assistance in the area.

Equatorial Guinea has always advocated for dialogue as the primary means for settling conflicts with the goal of ensuring bringing about peace. We therefore acknowledge, commend and enthusiastically support the role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in its work as mediator and in advancing reconciliation at all levels through dialogue. We believe that that is the way to achieve the political transition for which the Libyan people have been yearning for more than seven years, during which they have been embroiled in a conflict that has resulted in the loss of many lives, including among women and children.

We also underline the role of various regional and international actors, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union, among others, for their work to reach political solutions to end the situation in Libya. Given the plight of the Libyan people, we call on the parties involved to reach an understanding and pool their efforts so as to make the Libyan Political Agreement a reality and end the protracted political transition, thereby allowing for the holding of legislative elections, which would lead to the re-establishment of peace and security in Libya — a process that we want to see take place safely, transparently, freely and democratically without any interference from external third parties.

In conclusion, we are deeply concerned about a situation marked by anarchy and insecurity and the deterioration in the humanitarian situation caused by persistent clashes among armed groups. We have also seen abductions, assassinations, the rape of women and children, arbitrary detention and torture — as has been indicated in the report of the Secretary-General — as well as the situation concerning refugees and migrants, who, according to the report (see S/2017/466) of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011), concerning Libya, continue to be subjected to degrading treatment, abuse, human trafficking and other barbaric indignities. Faced with such unrelenting facts, we therefore urge all Council members and the entire international community to redouble their efforts to end the situation on the ground, which does not seem to have a clear end in sight.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Salamé and Ambassador Orrenius Skau for their comprehensive updates on the situation in Libya and the activities of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, respectively. We fully support the view that the solution to the situation in Libya must be solely a peaceful one and that the Libyans themselves must have ownership over the political process. The Libyan Political Agreement remains the only viable framework throughout the transitional period to end the protracted political crisis. However, we need to move from the transitional phase to permanent stability in Libya, and we believe that the following steps should be undertaken.

First, a referendum should be held to approve a new constitution, as the Supreme Court of Libya ruled in favour of the draft constitution on 14 February, thereby removing all legal obstacles.

Secondly, free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections should be held, which would mark the end of the transitional period. We fully support the observations made by the Secretary-General in his latest report on Libya (S/2019/140) that it is essential to enjoy broad political consensus concerning the elections and to encourage both participation and acceptance of the results. It is also critical that the appropriate legal framework be in place.

Thirdly, priority should be placed on the development agenda. We commend the efforts of the of the United Nations development system in drafting a strategic framework for Libya for the period from 2019 to 2020 with the active participation of humanitarian agencies, Libyan officials and civil society representatives.

Fourthly, issues concerning impunity related to migrants, the violation of their human rights and their humanitarian plight and dire situation should be addressed properly.

Moreover, we believe that international initiatives to advance political reconciliation in Libya should be consolidated under the leadership of United Nations-led efforts. It is important that the Security Council maintain unity and support the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Salamé and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. In that regard, Kazakhstan commends the active efforts of the Special Representative and encourages him to continue his engagement with a wide range of actors so as to broaden support and their commitments to the political process.

Lastly, concerning the sanctions regime, it is vital that Libya's oil resources be used for the benefit of Libyans. The smuggling of fuel continues to be a prosperous activity and generates a significant flow of income to boost local armed groups and cross-border criminal networks. In that regard, strict compliance with the embargo on the supply of arms to Libya must be reinforced.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our gratitude for the briefing by Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and take this opportunity to reiterate our unwavering support

for the work that he continues to do. Likewise, we are grateful for the briefing by Ambassador Orrenius Skau, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Sweden, on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, on the Committee's work.

It has been almost eight years since the conflict began in Libya and, given the inconceivable suffering that the Libyan people have been subjected to, the comprehensive implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement is crucially needed to definitively conclude the transition period. Accordingly, my delegation underscores the willingness to engage in dialogue and the commitment shown by the parties during the meetings of the joint drafting committee to find common ground to facilitate its effective implementation as well as to comply with the proposals set out in the United Nations action plan advanced by the Special Representative. That same notable willingness must be maintained and lead to a participatory process led by and for the Libyan people.

It is therefore necessary to promote and move forward the holding of a referendum on a new constitution that clearly defines the elements needed for electoral processes that will consolidate and bring to term the transition period and, above all, will establish the guidelines to develop the entire normative structure enabling the establishment of reliable and competent institutions upon which the State will be anchored. To that end, we believe that the progress made by the Libyan High Commission for National Elections in voter registration has been a fundamental step, with 2.5 million people registered, of whom almost half are women, at the time of the writing of the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/140). In that understanding, we believe it essential to ensure the active participation of women, young people and all sectors of society in this process. We appreciate and highlight the ongoing efforts of various subregional and regional organizations, such as the African Union, and countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia, among others, to strengthen, support and advance the Libyan political process and the action plan.

Despite these positive actions, we deplore the worrying increase in violence and confrontations between the parties during the reporting period, which, according to the report of the Secretary-General, have resulted in more than 160 deaths. Likewise, the continuous reports of abductions, torture, arbitrary detentions and summary executions are disturbing, particularly in the cities of Derna and Benghazi, where clashes have also occurred and where public spaces and civil services have been identified as military targets, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. In this regard, we reiterate our call on the parties and local actors to lay down their arms and avoid any rhetoric that calls for violence as a means of achieving any objective, since these attitudes not only threaten the lives of hundreds of innocent people, but also setback and undermine the progress made so far in implementing the Libyan Political Agreement.

It is also alarming that, according to the report of the Secretary-General, irregular combatants and foreign armed groups from the Sudan and Chad are present in Libyan territory and that their activities and involvement in armed clashes in the south of the country only exacerbate the internal conflict to the detriment of the efforts being made by the Libyan people to stabilize their country. Furthermore, the threat posed by the movement of foreign terrorist fighters from Da'esh to Libya, following their defeat and expulsion from Iraq and Syria, is an imminent threat that endangers the security not only of Libya, but of the entire region, since, despite their defeat, they would still be able to coordinate attacks through covert cells and engage in arms trafficking despite the current embargo.

The situation of migrants and refugees has not improved. According to the report of the International Organization for Migration of 28 February, during that month alone 34 people were killed in attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea, mainly from the ports of Zuwara, Tripoli and Azawiya. Unfortunately, these victims are among the more than 316 fatalities recorded so far this year. We note with concern repeated reports of violations of the rights of migrants, who are detained indefinitely in detention centres under reprehensible conditions, subjected to degrading treatment, torture, forced labour, denial of medical assistance and sexual violence. We call on the parties to prevent abuses and violations of the human rights of migrants in the centres under their control, and we recall that they must comply with their obligations under international law and guarantee respect for the rights of these persons. We reiterate once again to the Libyan authorities that they must initiate appropriate investigations to identify those responsible for these violations so that these acts do not remain unpunished.

In conclusion, we call on all parties to join in the ongoing efforts to maintain a continuous dialogue that will allow for a peaceful, orderly and inclusive political transition that responds to the interests of the Libyan people and allows them to freely and consensually define their future within the framework of their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, since there is no military solution to this conflict. We recall that the only option for resolving this conflict is through compliance with the Libyan Political Agreement, recognized by resolution 2259 (2015), and reaffirm that it must be implemented, as stated in presidential statement S/PRST/2017/26, of 14 December 2017.

The President: I wish to again remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure to congratulate you, Madam President, on your delegation's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2018/140) on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). I would further like to express our thanks and appreciation to his Excellency Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of UNSMIL, for his important briefing on the latest developments in Libya and the extensive efforts being made to resolve the political crisis in the country. We also thank the representative of Sweden for his briefing as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, in which he addressed the latest developments on the sanctions in Libya.

The international community has stressed its firm commitment to resolving the crisis in Libya through an inclusive political settlement embodied in the United Nations action plan adopted at the high-level meeting held in New York on 20 September 2017. The action plan is primarily based on the Libyan Political Agreement signed on 17 December 2015, which remains the sole framework for ending the conflict between Libyan parties, free from menacing rhetoric and use of force. All Libyan parties engaging in the political dialogue have committed to the Agreement, which is aimed at concluding the transitional stage and all other stages included in the United Nations action plan, and establish a strong and resilient Government to lead the country to safety and security. We highly appreciate the great efforts of Mr. Ghassan Salamé in reaching out to all parties, and underscore the vital role of the United Nations in facilitating the Libyan dialogue. We also appreciate the regional efforts that have been coordinated with those of the United Nations, especially those of the League of Arab States and the African Union towards resolving the Libyan crisis.

We warn against any intervention or unilateral initiative that could only thwart United Nations efforts and fail to resolve the Libyan crisis. We note the statement made by the President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord on 17 February 2018, addressed to the Libyan people on the seventh anniversary of the revolution, with respect to the negative effect of foreign interventions in the Libyan crisis.

As for recent positive developments in the political process in Libya, and thanks to the support of the Government of National Accord and UNSMIL, the High Commission for National Elections has started registering citizens living in the country. The number of registered people is more than half of those qualified to participate in the elections. The High Commission has also started to register citizens residing in foreign countries. This is a process that remains ongoing. We hope that the House of Representatives will soon adopt an electoral law allowing the High Commission to finish the procedural work and set a date for the elections, in coordination with the House, the Presidency Council and the High Council of States. If a date is set, we hope to see all political parties accepting the results of the elections, which could lead to the reconstruction of the State and the unification and reactivation of its institutions, and to alleviating the suffering of the Libyan people.

Undoubtedly, insecurity and the proliferation of weapons are among the main challenges that the international community must address to help Libya, especially at this sensitive time. Although the security situation has improved in the capital Tripoli and its surrounding areas, thanks to the efforts of the Government of National Accord, security incidents involving the terrorizing of civilians continue to occur from time to time because of some rogue armed groups. In this regard, we stress the need to unify all military, security and law enforcement institutions.

These institutions must respect the principle of military leadership and control, pursuant to the military law, and must work under civilian leadership and proceed to the dissolution of armed groups and the collection of weapons.

It has become urgent to improve the security situation in Libya and a prerequisite for the success of any political process and for addressing all challenges, including the fight against terrorism, illicit migration and the protection of human rights. If weapons and tyrannical armed groups continue to proliferate, then security and stability in the country and the democratic civil State will not be achieved and no political solution will succeed. In this regard, there is hope that the efforts of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt to unify the Libyan National Army will succeed. Six rounds of meetings have been held so far between the military leadership and high-ranking officers in western, eastern and southern Libya.

With respect to the economic situation, there has been a tangible increase in oil exports, which have almost reached the goal of 1.5 million barrels per day. If it were not for the security situation, the National Oil Corporation would have been able to achieve that goal by now, thereby increasing the revenue of the State, which would in turn have alleviated the economic distress and civilian suffering. However, the ongoing political schism and the presence of parallel institutions, in addition to the deterioration of the security situation as a result of fighting over resources by some greedy parties with the aim of achieving individual gains at the expense of citizens' livelihood, have contributed to the continued deterioration of the economic situation and the suffering of citizens. We stress again that all economic problems can be solved only through a unified Government of National Accord and unified sovereign institutions.

As members of the Council know, the oil and financial wealth of Libya is being looted at the national and foreign levels. Locally, oil continues to be smuggled by criminal gangs, which established that illicit trade with the aim of obtaining revenues in the millions of dollars. That is a waste of the wealth of the country and the Libyan people. We therefore commend the efforts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya and its Panel of Experts, especially in terms of the implementation of relevant Council resolutions.

Regarding the financial wealth, all Libyans must first and foremost surmount their differences and work together to serve the interests of the country. They must agree to unify their main institutions, such as the Libyan Central Bank, the National Oil Corporation and the Libyan Investment Authority, to protect the wealth of the Libyan people and future generations. Those institutions must discharge their duties as required, free of all political polarization. Ongoing disputes over these institutions could lead to a terrible disaster, the primary victim of which will be the Libyan people. We call on all parties to reach an agreement and put the interest of Libya and the Libyans first.

In conclusion, I would like to express our deep trust in the work of the Libyan sanctions committee and its Panel of Experts, in addition to their role in the protection of the wealth of the Libyan people. We also place our confidence in the efforts of the United Nations to achieve security and stability in Libya.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be very brief. I would just like to inform the Council that we will be circulating something related to an item on our agenda. It is a documentary film on what is currently going on in eastern Ghouta. On the same subject, I would like to conclude my statement by reading two paragraphs from today's press.

(*spoke in English*)

> "A Russian-brokered deal has been reached to evacuate a Syrian rebel group from a town in eastern Ghouta to opposition-held north-western Syria in the first such deal in the last remaining rebel bastion near the capital, two opposition sources said on Wednesday. They said fighters from the Ahrar Al-Sham rebel group in control of the besieged town of Harasta had agreed to lay down their arms in return for safe passage to insurgent-controlled areas and an offer to be pardoned under local reconciliation terms with the authorities for those who want to stay."

This is not a Russian statement, but from Reuters. The second relevant short paragraph, from *The Independent*, in the United Kingdom, says that

> "rockets fired on a market in a Government-controlled area of Damascus killed 35 people and wounded more than 20 others, Syrian State-run

media has said. This marks one of the highest death tolls in a single attack targeting the capital."

(*spoke in Russian*)

That all relates to how resolution 2401 (2018) is being implemented — its implementation, or non-implementation, being something that many Council members here like to talk about. The film I mentioned is a documentary. It has no embellishments whatsoever. It is not a feature film, but gives us a realistic picture of what has been going on in the past few days in this enclave on the outskirts of Damascus. I hope that Council members can find the time to watch it.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.